Holy [illegible]

JUSTIFIED

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SERMON

Preached before the

Right Honorable and Right [illegible]

FATHER in GOD

HENRY

LORD Bishop of LONDON, &c.

AT

A Conference held with his Clergy at

Castle-Hinningham in the County of *Essex*.

By *Philip Browne*, Vicar of *Halstead* in the [illegible]
And Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of [illegible]

Τὰς [illegible] Ignatius, ad Philip. III. Ed. Vell.

Recte Festa Ecclesiæ Columnæ, qui se Ecclesiæ Filios Recognoscunt.
Aug. Ser. 253. de Temp.

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TO

The Right Honourable,

AND

Right Reverend Father in *GOD*,

HENRY

Lord Biſhop of *LONDON*,&c.

My Lord,

WHEN I was at firſt prevailed upon by the Importunity of ſome Friends, to promiſe the publiſhing of the Enſuing Sermon, *(whereof Your Lordſhip gave both the Subject and the Occaſion,) I thought I could not provide better for my own ſecurity, than to commit it to Your Lordſhips Patronage; Nor do the Subject greater Right than to reſtore it to the Honourable Perſon that entruſted Me with the Management thereof, with ſuch improvements as my ſmall Abilities, and the ſlender Tackling I was Maſter of, enabled me to make. And I do not at all doubt, but that, ſince Your Lordſhip was pleaſed to afford it a favourable Audience, and ſo far ſignified your Approbation of it, The ſame Goodneſs will (now that it comes abroad) Vouchſafe it a Gracious Look; and not only ſo, but own and cheriſh it (however Mean and Unworthy in it ſelf) as the Off-ſpring and Product of Your Lordſhips Command, and my ready Compliance and Chearful Obedience thereunto. It will doubtleſs re-*

dound to Your Lordship's Eternal Honour and Comfort, (And not only the present, but future Ages that shall find the benefit thereof, will have cause to bless You for it) That all along in Your Episcopal Visitations, and your most familiar, condescending, and obliging Conferences with your Clergy, You have not only straitly charg'd, and recommended to their Teaching and Practice, both the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England; *but also have employ'd them in the Defence thereof. And besides, (as I have been inform'd) put several of the most Eminent of Your City-Clergy upon Answering the Scruples, and removing the Obstacles, wherewith the Mischievous Factors both of* Rome *and* Geneva *have for a long time, to their great, both Spiritual and Temporal inconvenience, obstructed many people's Conformity to the present Establishments. Insomuch, that if people would now but lay aside their wilful prejudices and prepossessions, and make use of their Eyes, and that portion of Reason that God has blessed them with, and carefully and seriously read the late printed Cases, They may receive such satisfaction, as perhaps they never yet had the Opportunity to meet with before; and withal discover the gross Cheats that have been put upon them by such pretended Guides as they have formerly made use of, who did so hoodwink and block them up in their Errours, that they were not able to see their way out. But the Way is now made so plain and open, that, (if they will) they may easily extricate themselves, and find a fair and well-beaten track that will conduct them to a safe Harbour, where, with a good Conscience, they may serve God and save themselves, I mean the Bosom of that Church which they have so long declin'd and run from. And people must Now be wilfully and resolvedly blind, that do not see it; and very wanton and humoursome too, that, instead of laying hold of such opportunities and advantages, as are put into their hands, shall complain either of the straitness or ruggedness of the Way, and that the Terms of Admission into our Church, are so Dangerous and Narrow, that they cannot without sin Conform, (which by the way is a gross falsity) and upon that pretence with no small Noyse, and Clamour, mutiny, and petition for Tolerations, Comprehensions, Indulgences, Dispensations, and I know not what Relaxations of the Established Laws and Constitutions of the Church; which must needs be of ill Consequence, if not shake her Foundations, and endanger her Safety.*

Whereas

Whereas in this licentious Age of ours, wherein every body takes the liberty to believe and do what he liſts, there is more need to ſtraiten, than to ſlacken the Reins of Diſcipline. Should our Church to gratifie the Humours and Caprichio's of a heady male-contented People, let go her Anchor, and part with her Hold, before She were ſecure of a ſafe Port to retreat to, She would throw her ſelf upon uncertainties, and hardly eſcape either being ſwallowed up by ſome unknown Quick-ſands, or run upon ſome dangerous Rocks; And beſides, expoſe her ſelf a Prey to the mercy and mockery of a Foreign Enemy, that is ready and watchful to take all ſuch opportunities, and has skill enough to improve them to their own advantage, and to be ſure to her Coſt.

We ſee God Almighty, who is Unchangeable in all his Ways, never yet repealed, altered, or accommodated his Laws to the luſts and humours of any degenerate Age, but they remain the ſame Now, that they were from the Beginning; And if the World will receive any benefit by them, it muſt come up to them, and not expect that they ſhould ſo far debaſe and depreciate themſelves as to ſtoop to its Lure; for this would weaken their Authority and Sanction, and render them cheap and precarious. And though God Almighty does make very Merciful and Favourable Allowances for our unavoidable frailties, and irremediable infirmities; Yet to ſuch as offend of Malicious Wickedneſs, he will not without repentance and amendment, abate any thing of the rigour and ſtrictneſs of his Laws. Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs, but one jot, or one tittle ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law, *ſaith our Saviour*, St. Matth. 5. 18. *And why ſhould it not be thus with the Churches Laws, when confeſſedly good and uſeful in themſelves, and fitted to ſerve the great Ends and Purpoſes of Religion? Why may they not be the ſame in this, as in former Ages? eſpecially, when there is as much, Nay more need for them now than ever; and when the very performance of them gives us an occaſion to exerciſe and exert ſo many Chriſtian Virtues, which our Saviour has made Eſſential to the profeſſion of his Religion; ſuch as Mortification, Self-denyal, Temperance, Patience, Meekneſs, Humility, Modeſty, Submiſſion and Obedience to a Lawful Authority, with others the like; And beſides, by inuring us to Diſcipline, it trains us up to endure hardneſs as good Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo fits and prepares us for our Chriſtian Warfare,*

fare, and the better enables us to perform our Baptismal Vow of renouncing the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; and Consequently tends to promote our Perfection, and facilitate our Way to Happiness? And why may there not be, after Gods own Example, very fair and equitable allowances for such as through simplicity, meer ignorance, humane frailty, inadvertency, or the like pitiable Circumstances, (which discover a man's misfortune rather than his fault, and more his Weakness, than his Wilfulness,) transgress such Laws, without admitting any change or alteration of them? Whereas should they be either repealed and taken out of the way, or quite laid aside, or made to bend to the exorbitant lusts and humours of a stubborn Age, and such persons and wicked people in it, as have already more than once fiercely assail'd, and broken down the Fences and Mounds of Discipline; This would be so far from reclaiming them, and gaining them to the Church, that they would gain the Church to themselves, and so gain their purpose too; and have, with the allowance of Authority, but a greater scope, and a better opportunity to react and perpetrate anew all their former wicked Pranks and Villanies. And to add one Consideration more about this matter. New Modes and Fashions, however at every turn they may sute well enough with our Cloths, yet they will hardly so well become the Garb and Attire of Religion, which, like it self, the older it is, the better it is, and renders it the more awful and venerable; but when Religion changes its Fashion, and is ever and anon appearing in a new Dress, the generality of the people are apt to mistake it for a New Religion, and so it is likely to find but cold entertainment with the jealous, and such as have for a long time been otherwise accustomed; And upon this very account it is not safe to make the experiment. And were we not well acquainted with their Tricks, it would make one wonder, That the very same persons which, when Time was, exclaim'd so much against Innovations, and alarm'd the Peoples jealousies thereby, should upon a new turn of the Times stand and press so much for them, to the no small danger of the Government; but then was then, and now is now, and they know well enough how to play the same Game over again under a new Disguise.

But I beg your Lordships Pardon for this Excursion, and only add that I heartily wish, that We of the Clergy would so far consult our own and the Churches Interest, as all unanimously and

and uniformly (next to the Holy Scriptures) to study and practise, according to our Oath of Canonical Obedience, the Rules of the Church, as they are plainly laid down in her Rubricks and Canons, especially such as immediately concern the Worship of God, and the Administration of her Sacred Offices; for as the Rules and our Obligation to them, are one and the same to us all, so ought our Administration to be Uniform according to those Rules; that in one and the same Church, we may all speak and do the same things, and with one Mind, and one Mouth, and in one Way glorifie the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And particularly as to the Instance before us, That we would use our utmost Care and Endeavours to put in practice the Observation of such Holy-days as the Church appoints, according to the express Words and Injunctions of the 13th, 14th, *and* 64th *Canons, and the Rubrick after the Nicene Creed. The retrieving of which, almost lost and forgotten Part of Discipline, as it was by your Lordships appointment, the design of the preaching, so (next to my acquitting my self of the forementioned Promise, which I had done sooner, had I had the Opportunity of transcribing it before,) 'tis the design also of my publishing the ensuing Discourse; and however I may come short in many things that might be said for the justification of the Churches procedure herein, as also in the Applicatory part thereof, yet I have done my Endeavour, and hope by this publication to provoke and stir up others of my more learned Brethren, that have been employed upon this and other such like Services, to join issue, and communicate their larger Collections, and more exact and better digested Notions and Observations upon this, and other unusual Subjects, whereof so little has been purposely said of late days; that so the Churches Magazine may be plentifully stock'd, and richly furnished with Armour and Ammunition of all sorts and sizes, to be ready upon occasion to be employed in its Service, to the Battering down of all Heresie and Schism, and the subduing and rooting out of Popery on the one hand, and Fanaticism on the other. And provided I can be any ways serviceable to the Churches Interest, and promote the publick Good, and approve my self to your Lordship and others of the wiser and better Sort, I am little sollicitous what becomes of me, as to other People; for I have been pretty well exercis'd where I am,*

and

and have learnt in the discharge of my Duty, to pass as well through evil Report as good Report: and am therefore the better able to bear the Censures and hard Speeches of the Envious and Malicious, or other idle and wanton Heads, that use to carp at what they either cannot, or will not mend.

God Almighty bless, protect, direct and preserve your Lordship in all your weighty and honourable Undertakings, and long continue you, what you are, a great Ornament and firm Pillar of the Church here Militant, and a sure Prop and Buttress to the State now regnant, till at last it please him to translate you from an Earthly to an Heavenly See, the Sedes Beatorum, *and add you to the glorious Company of the Apostles and holy Bishops in the Church above Triumphant. Which is the hearty Prayer of*

Novemb. the 26th
1684.

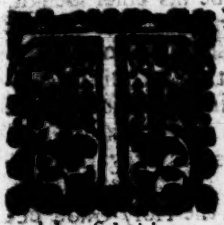
My Lord,

Your Lordships most Obedient and most Humble
Servant,

PHIL. BROWNE.

Acts, Ch. 20. v. 16. the latter part.

For he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.



THE Task and Business assigned me at this time by the Right Reverend Father in God, our much honoured Diocesan, (ὃν ὄντα ἡμῶν ἐπίσκοπον δεῖ αἰδεῖσθαι, ὡς Χριστόν, (as S. *Ignatius* speaks *) whom we ought to reverence and obey, according to our Canonical Oath, *in omnibus licitis & honestis*, i. e. in all honest and lawful things, even as Christ himself, whose Person and Office he bears with respect to us) is, as you all very well know, to treat of a Subject too much every where neglected and laid aside; and that too, I am afraid, by too many of those who are concerned to look better after it; and that is, the Observation of such Holy Days, as are appointed and commanded by our Church: whose Procedure herein I am to justifie, and also heartily to recommend to your utmost Care and Endeavours the recovery of so useful, though almost in some places quite forgotten part of Discipline.

* *Epist. ad Trall. p.* 161. *Ed. Voss.*

And I think I cannot do better than to take my rise from this Passage of St. *Luke* in this Chapter of the *Acts*, who giving an Account of St. *Paul*'s Travels to various Parts of *Asia* and *Greece*, to propagate the Gospel, and visit such Churches as he had planted with his own hands, and confirm them in the Faith of Christ, doth here subjoyn this as the reason why in his return through *Asia* he declined *Ephesus*, and would make so short a stay in those Parts; Namely,

He hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Which some understand of St. *Paul*'s great desire to keep it there as a Christian Feast; which however it does not necessarily follow from the Text, for St. *Paul* might desire to be there for several other Reasons; Namely, because he was at that time sure to meet with a great Number of the Brethren, and because he should have a fitter opportunity to preach the Gospel to the *Jews*, who from all Parts flocked thither, (as our Saviour himself for the same reason used to go up to *Jerusalem* at their great and solemn Feasts.) This might, I say, be his main and principal Aim in hasting thither at such a time; but for all this, though it might be his chief Design, Yet there might be some other subordinate ends consistent enough with this, for which he might also desire to make so much haste thither; And particularly that he might celebrate this Feast in a Christian Manner, in opposition to the Jewish Celebration thereof; which was now to expire and give Way to the other. This, I say, is not altogether improbable, for these Reasons following;

1. First, This was the very day in which the Holy Ghost descended upon the Apostles and Disciples, that according to our Saviours own Appointment, were met together with one Accord, in one place, at *Jerusalem*; as you may see an account thereof in the Second Chapter of the *Acts*.

Now can it be thought, That such a remarkable Event as this, that was attended with such Surprizing and astonishing Circumstances, as we there read of; and was of such universal and publick Concern and Advantage to the Church, should be quite forgotten and taken no notice of afterwards in an Anniversary Commemoration thereof; only at that time wherein it happened? this is not to be conceived: for doubtless the Apostles and Primitive Christians understood themselves and their Duty better; for their Righteousness in all Instances whatsoever, was, by our Saviour's own Command, to exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees; And if these latter observed publick days in testimony of their gratitude for publick Blessings and Mercies received, so questionless the Apostles did the same; Else they must needs

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needs have fallen short of them as to the Expreſſions of their gratitude, and their righteouſneſs in this particular had not exceeded the righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, according to our Saviours Rule. And therefore I do not at all doubt, but Early Care was taken to keep up the Memory of ſo glorious a Tranſaction by an Anniverſary publick Celebration thereof, at the Yearly return of the *Jewiſh Pentecoſt*; Our Saviour having made choice of that very time for the Completion of his Promiſe to the Apoſtles in ſending them the Holy Ghoſt. And this without any danger of Judaizing, for they obſerved it in a Chriſtian Manner, and to quite different ends and purpoſes, which was enough to free it from Judaiſm. And therefore I ſay, St. *Paul* may well be ſuppoſed here (however it is not clearly expreſſed in the Text) to haſten to *Jeruſalem*, for this very reaſon among others, namely, to celebrate the Chriſtian Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*: which accordingly, ſo far as we have any light to guide us, has been obſerved by all Churches in all Ages; and particularly by our own Church, ever ſince Chriſtianity ſet footing amongſt us, even to this very day.

Secondly, An other Reaſon wherefore I imagine St. *Paul* might haſten to *Jeruſalem* for this very purpoſe, is, That becauſe I obſerve all along, that both our Saviour and his Apoſtles in their firſt planting the Goſpel, and propagating Chriſtianity, (which had its firſt riſe and beginning among the *Jews*,) came as near to them, as poſſibly they could, in many of their ancient Inſtitutions, Cuſtomes and Practices, that were not wholly typical and ceremonious. For our Saviour being their Meſſiah in the firſt place, was greatly deſirous, as much as might be, to endear himſelf to them, and by all means to give them as little Offence in his Conſtitutions, as was poſſible; and therefore hath retained ſome of their great Cuſtoms, and adopted them into his own Religion, and advanced them into the moſt Solemn and Holy Sacraments. This is clear in the two Sacraments of Baptiſm and the Lord's-Supper, which he borrowed from the *Jewiſh* Cuſtoms of initiating and admitting Proſelytes by waſhing; and their *Poſtcenium*, or practice after Supper 2.

of distributing Bread, and drinking Wine about the Table in token of Charity and Brotherliness among them. And moreover we read, that he frequented their Synagogues, and resorted to their Temple at the usual hours of Prayer; and in what Part of the Country soever he was, he would be sure to be up at *Jerusalem* at their solemn Feasts. And likewise according to their Master's Example did the Apostles; they accommodated and conformed themselves to the *Jewish* Practice in several particular Instances, and made as small and as few Changes and Alterations as they could; whatsoever was capable of being made useful and serviceable to the purposes of Christianity, they embraced and retained: and this with great Wisdom and Prudence, that they might thereby the more easiler gain them over to the Christian Religion. They were far from making an irreconcileable Breach, or laying such stumbling Blocks in their way, that they might not easily stride over and come to them. They were far from the Temper and Practice of some of our Modern Reformers, who think they cannot be far enough from *Rome*, unless in all things they tread Antipodes, and be diametrically opposite to it. Their design was plainly and evidently to reconcile them to Christianity, and to disciple them into the Religion of the Holy Jesus: And therefore they would be as little offensive to them, as possibly they could; but complyed with them, as far as they might with safety, provided no prejudice redounded thereby to Christianity, which they were not only to spread and propagate, but to secure from the *Jewish* Leaven.

Now Time whether generally or particularly considered, whether taken in the whole or in the parts, is indifferent and common to all Religions, and neither Morally good nor bad in it self, but accordingly as it is clothed with Circumstances, and join'd with, and affected by good or bad things; and provided it be freed from the *Jewish* Superstitions and Observances, it may safely be applyed to Christian Uses. And it being apparent that it was both our Saviour's and his Apostles design to recede from the *Jews* as little as they could, and give them as few Exceptions as were possible, on purpose that Christianity might find the easier

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Reception and Entertainment among them, we are morally, as certain as we can be, in a Matter whereof there is no express account in Scripture, that they did without any Scruple so far comply with the *Jews*, as to institute and observe some of the Christian Feasts at the very time that the *Jews* observed theirs; and particularly the Feast of *Pentecost*; and consequently, that St. *Paul* might (not without reason) be here said to make haste to *Jerusalem*, to observe the Christian *Pentecost*.

Thirdly, *Jerusalem* was the Place where Christianity first took its beginning, made its first entrance into the World, and being there confirmed and established, was from thence to be derived into all other Parts of the World; as was Prophesied concerning it, *Isa.* 2. 3. *Out of* Zion *shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from* Jerusalem. And 'tis there expresly said, that this shall be in the last Days, that is, in our Saviour and Apostles time, when the *Jewish* Oeconomy was come to its last Period. 3.

Now, I say, if Christianity was to have its beginning and first establishment at *Jerusalem* (as it certainly had) then doubtless about the same time care was taken by the Apostles, that those Observations, which were to be the constant Attendants of it, and conduced so much to the preservation and continuation of the outward visible Profession thereof, and to its Solemnity, and so were of universal concern; should together with it have their Institution and Original too: that by the constant uninterrupted Use and Practice thereof, the first Christians being inured to, and confirmed in them, they might pass into a Custom, and so be the more easily and certainly thence derived, together with Christianity it self, into the other Parts of the World, upon the Dispersion of the Christians at the so famous Siege and Destruction of *Jerusalem*. And therefore the Apostle here might well desire to make so much haste to *Jerusalem* at the time of *Pentecost*, to confirm the Christians in the use and observation of This, as well as other Christian Usages, that were to be the Vehicles and Conservatories of the Christian Religion, and the chief and most remarkable Passages thereof.

And

And if it be said, That neither does this Place, nor any other in Scripture tell us so, I answer, that neither does it assign any other reason of his hasting thither, nor are the reasons which others bring for it at all mentioned, and therefore why not this, as well as others, or rather why not this together with others, since they are no way inconsistent, as I have made appear?

But in truth this is no Objection at all, for Scripture takes no notice of many other things which we allow of at this day to be (if not of divine, yet) of Apostolical appointment, and without doubt had the same Original, but have no where in Scripture any direct and express Warrant or positive Institution, such as Infant Baptism, Womens receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the observation of the Lord's-Day, together with some others which are under no special Command at all, but to be collected from some obscure Passages, and By-hints and Intimations in Scripture, compared with the constant Tradition and universal practice of the Church, both in that, and after-Ages; whereof we have a good and clear account in such Primitive Writers, as God Almighty's Providence has handed down to us, for our better satisfaction in these Matters, whereof no doubt is to be made.

4. Fourthly, To render the thing yet more probable, I infer St. *Paul*'s desire to observe this particular Feast, which my Text points at, from what he in express Words do's declare, *chap.* 18. 21. *v.* concerning the Feast of the Passover: where having been sollicited by *Priscilla* and *Aquila* to tarry longer at *Ephesus*, the Text says, he consented not, *but bad them farewel*, saying, *I must needs by all means keep this Feast that cometh in* Jerusalem. Where you see, that he openly owns and declares his Intention and Resolution to keep the Feast of the Pass-over, which he there calls, τὴν ἑορτὴν the Feast; which to be sure he meant not in the *Jewish* but Christian sense; for the *Jewish* observance thereof, together with all the *Mosaick* Rites and Ceremonies, were a good while before that abrogated, and their Obligation declared to be void and null, by a Synodical Decree

cree at *Jeruſalem*, as the 15th of *Acts* plainly tells us.

Now ſince he gives this here as the ſole Reaſon wherefore he parted with them ſo ſoon, and took his leave of them, I would fain know what Abſurdity or Inconvenience would enſue upon it, if we aſſert, that the ſame Reaſon that ſwayed St. *Paul* at this time, and made him leave his beloved Companions ſo ſoon, might alſo prevail with him at the time our Text ſpeaks of, *to make haſt to* Jeruſalem, *purpoſely to keep the Chriſtian Feaſt of Pentecoſt alſo*; there being as good reaſon for the one as the other.

And indeed this laſt quoted place is ſo plain for the Obſervation of the Chriſtian Paſsover, the ſame with our *Eaſter*, that had it occurr'd to my thoughts before I had made ſome Entrance and Progreſs into my Text, I ſhould (it's likely) have made it the Foundation of my Diſcourſe, and ſo have begun more orderly with the Feaſt of *Eaſter*, which in Time is before it; but it will come all to the ſame thing at laſt; and therefore I would not alter my firſt purpoſe, and begin anew, and ſo give my ſelf a new trouble.

Having thus made good my Hypotheſis, and eſtabliſhed it upon ſuch Reaſons as carry as fair a probability with them as any other, and ſo by the way in ſome Meaſure, juſtified the obſervation of one particular Feaſt of our Church, to wit, *Pentecoſt*, or *Whitſunday*, which my Text gave me an occaſion to treat firſt of, and which I may again take notice of in the ſequel of my Diſcourſe; I hope I ſhall not be cenſured as trifling and impertinent for recommending to you this Text upon this Occaſion, having ſufficiently cleared and evinced the ſutableneſs thereof thereunto. And therefore from what hath been already ſaid, I ſhall proceed to a more general Conſideration, and ſhew you concerning this, as well as other Holy Days appointed by our Church,

Firſt, The *Lawfulneſs* of them;	1.
Secondly, Their great *Uſefulneſs*;	2.
Thirdly, The *Reſpect* and *Eſteem* that we are to give them, and the *Account* we are to make of them; And	3.
Fourthly, and laſtly, Apply all, and preſs you to a due Obſervation of them.	4.

But

But before I enter upon the First of these, it may not be amiss to declare, what we are here to understand by Holy Days, and what Holy Days we mean, for there are many so called which are not allowed in our Calendar.

Now as for the word, *Holy*, if we look into Scripture, we shall find, That when it is applyed to Persons, Times, and Things, it is all one with being separate, and set apart to God and Religious Uses, and is opposed to Common; *What God hath Cleansed, that call not thou Common*, Acts 10. 15. Holy Days then are those which are taken out of Common days, and by a special designation are separated to Gods Holy Service and Worship, either by Gods own Appointment, or by Holy Churches Dedication. Of which sort are all the *Sundays* in the Year, and all those other holy days both Fasts and Feasts (for there are holy Fasts as well as holy Feasts) which our Church hath singled out, and set apart, and dedicated to holy purposes, and the Solemn Service and Worship of Almighty God, and enjoyn'd to be observed with all due care and solemnity. For a particular account whereof (for I shall not now name them all to you) I shall refer you to the Tables after the Calendar in your Books of Common Prayer, as containing the only Days appointed by our Church to be kept holy. And they all relate either to our Lord, and the most remarkable Passages of his Life, to wit, his Birth; his Circumcision; his Manifestation by a Star; his Presentation in the Temple; his Forty Days Fast; his Death, Resurrection, Ascention and Mission of the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; And that which ensued thereupon, the Notice of the Ever Blessed, Glorious, and Incomprehensible Trinity; Most of which are the Articles of our Creed; Or they relate to the Angel's Message to the Blessed Virgin *Mary*, the Mother of our Lord; for his joyful and happy news of a Saviour to be born into the World; or to our Saviours fore-runner *John* the Baptist; or to St. *Michael* and the blessed Angels, who are ministring Spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be Heirs of Salvation; or to the slaughter'd Innocents; the Proto-Martyr St. *Stephen*; and to the holy Apostles in particular, and all blessed Saints in general, now in Heaven; whose Memories

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we deservedly celebrate and preserve here upon Earth, with solemn Thanks to Almighty God that made them the blessed Instruments of planting, confirming and propagating the Gospel of Christ both in their Lives and by their Deaths, and also renowned Examples and Patterns of Christian Piety and Vertue. All which are such Holy Days, as from the time of their several Institutions have been universally observed, and own'd by all Apostolical Churches in the World; and those of them that immediately relate to our Saviour, are of original and immemorial Usage, to be sure in this Church of ours, when no time can be assigned, wherein they were not observed, unless it were in our late miserable times of Confusion, when there was neither Church, nor so much as the face of Religion amongst us, but what was minted out of the fantastick Brains of a few leading factious Separatists, who (as *Hosea* speaks of the Church of *Israel*) abode many days without a King, and without a Prince, and without a Sacrifice, and without an Image, and without an Ephod, and without a Teraphim. *Hos.* 3. 4.

Now concerning the Observation of the Lord's-day in particular (commonly called Sunday) we have besides the natural Justice of the thing, that there should be some determinate time set apart, among the Christian Community, for the publick Worship of God; I say, besides this, we have the Antiquity and Authority of that Apostolical Order recorded, 1. *Cor.* 16. 1. implicitly and collaterally at least establishing it, wherein St. *Paul* gives order to the Church of *Corinth*, as he had done before to the Churches of *Galatia*, to make their Collection for the Saints on the first day of the Week; (the very day on which they used to Assemble for the publick Worship of God, as appears from *Acts* 20. 7. And upon the first day of the Week, when the Disciples came together to break Bread, *Paul* preached unto them) for (as St. *Chrysostom* well argues *) wherefore should St. *Paul* appoint that day to the Churches of *Galatia and Corinth*, for the laying by in store as God had prospered them; but that that day by the Rest it afforded, (and I may add, by the conveniency of their assembling together) gave them opportunity to do it? and moreover by the blessing

* *Chrysost.* in 1. *Cor.* 16. *Hom.* 43.

ſing it remembred, and the ſacred Offices that were performed in it, was apt to incite them to a more chearful and liberal Contribution.

This was the day that our Saviour honoured with his Reſurrection, and thereby gave occaſion for its being ſet apart; And alſo on this Day it was that he uſually appeared to his Diſciples and Apoſtles after his Reſurrection; particularly, to *Mary Magdalen* and the other Women, and to the two Diſciples that went to *Emaus*: in the Evening of which Day, after ſome Diſcourſe at a diſtance, he made himſelf known to them in breaking of Bread, that is, he diſcovered himſelf by adminiſtring his laſt Supper to them, juſt in the ſame manner that they had ſeen him do it the Night before his Paſſion; which could not but bring him to mind, and convince them that he was the very ſame Perſon that was riſen from the Dead, as you may ſee *Luke*, 24. 1, 15. 30. And on this Day it was that he met his aſſembled Diſciples, when the Doors were ſhut; and on the ſame Day eight days after, he met them again, when *Thomas* was with them; as you may ſee, *John*, 20 19. 26. Which together with the undeniable Cuſtom of all Churches throughout all Ages, (for which we have a whole Cloud of Witneſſes, the concurrent Teſtimonies of ſuch Writers as in ſeveral Ages have given an account of this Matter,) are all of them Arguments beyond all Contradiction, and Warrant little leſs than divine, that it is to be eſteemed Conſecrate, and ſet apart to the Worſhip of God. And then the force which the fourth Commandment in Equity bears, that what time is ſet apart or conſecrated to God, ſhould be ſanctified, *i. e.* ſpent to thoſe ſeparate Purpoſes and Intents for which it was ſet apart, (which is the meaning of ſanctifying or keeping holy any time) ſufficiently and beyond all Evaſion enjoyns it to be kept holy, it having once been ſet apart, as has before been proved. And certainly it muſt needs be an Argument of a very prophane, worldly and unchriſtian Spirit, not to afford God this Day free from ſenſual Pleaſures and worldly Cares or Labours; wherefore, I ſay, the keeping holy of the Lord's-Day is not to be queſtioned. And I would have no Man flatter himſelf, that he is a devout Chriſtian,

Christian, who useth either by Idleness or Pleasures, or unnecessary, worldly Business, to prophane what the Church, and (seeing that the Church has done it by good Warrant and Power transmitted to her by Christ, what) God himself hath allowed: Works of Charity or Mercy, are Acts of Holiness; and Works of Necessity, so far forth as they are so, are Works of Mercy; and then doing of these when due Occasion requires, is rather sanctifying, than unhallowing the Lord's-Day, (else St. *Paul* had done ill to make choice of this Day for the making up their Poors Collections) and if they be done out of duty to God and in his fear, we have his Warrant for the doing of them; who tells us in such Cases, that he will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, St. *Matth.* c. 9. 13. v.

As for the other Holy-days, they stand upon the same Bottom with Sundays, to wit, the Authority of the Church; and are all of them either of Apostolical or Ecclesiastical Institution; and some of them at least can plead the same Antiquity, and run up their Pedigree as high, or very near the same time; particularly *Easter*, *Whitsunday*, the *Epiphany*, *Christmas*, the *Quadragesimal*, or *Lent* Fast; the holy Week before *Easter*, commonly called Passion Week, and Good-Friday in particular; which are all very ancient, and were universally practised in the very first Ages of the Church.

And particularly, to begin with the *Primum Mobile* of all our Christian Feasts, the principal Feast of *Easter*, the Annual Commemoration of our Lord's Resurrection; what I spoke before concerning the great probability of the Apostolical Institution and Observation of the Christian *Pentecost* or *Whitsunday*, is with greater certainty applicable to the *Paschal* Feast or Feast of *Easter*; for as I shewed you before from *Acts* 18. 21. St. *Paul* expresly says concerning it, *I must by all means keep this Feast*; which cannot be understood in a *Jewish* sense, for both he, and the rest of the Apostles knew very well, that our Saviour had put an end to all such kind of *Jewish* Observations by his death upon the Cross, when all that concern'd the *Jewish* Oeconomy was finished, and the Vail of the Temple rent in twain; and besides,

they not only declared, but decreed againſt them: and for him after all this, to have obſerved it in the *Jewiſh* manner, had been in effect, to have denyed our Saviour to be come in the Fleſh, and to have ſuffered and dyed for us: And therefore it muſt neceſſarily be meant of the Chriſtian Paſs-over, or our *Eaſter*, which St. *Auguſtin* * will have to bear date with the Reſurrection of Chriſt's ſelf, and if ſo, then it muſt be at leaſt fifty days older than *Pentecoſt*. Nay more, he tells us in his 119 Epiſtle, That it was our Saviour himſelf that inſtituted and declared it to be kept holy, and by virtue of it all the Sundays of the Year beſides, being for this Cauſe, called by the Apoſtles the Lord's-Day *, and by the Fathers Gods own *Eaſter* *, the Queen of Feaſts, the higheſt of all Feaſts, and the Feaſt of Feaſts *, &c. And by them and our own Church, the Day which the Lord hath made. And to be ſure in the Age immediately ſucceeding the Apoſtles, we find the Obſervation thereof both enjoyned and practiſed, as appears by the eighth Canon of the Apoſtles, which commands every Biſhop, Presbyter and Deacon to celebrate after the Vernal Equinox, πλὴν ἁγίας τῆς πεντηκοστῆς ἡμέρας, the holy *Eaſter* day, and the ſixty ninth Canon does the ſame. And for the practice thereof, the old famous Quartodeciman or Paſchal Controverſie, between the Aſiatick and Weſtern Churches, (wherein St. *Polycarp*, who was one of St. *John*'s Diſciples, and ordained by him Biſhop of *Smyrna*, was perſonally concerned with his Contemporary *Anicetus* then Biſhop of *Rome*) about the punctual time of obſerving *Eaſter*, (which began ſo early and laſted ſo long, to the great diſturbance of the Church) doth fully evince it, and is alſo an indelible Mark of its Antiquity. For the ending of which Controverſy, among other reaſons, the Emperor *Conſtantine* ſummon'd the firſt General Council of *Nice*, which ordained *Eaſter* to be kept, on one and the ſame day throughout the World, not according to the *Jewiſh* account, but upon the Lord's-Day, as we now obſerve it. And this Decree he ratified and publiſhed in his Imperial Letter to all the Chriſtian Churches, recorded by *Euſebius* in his life; wherein treating περὶ τῆς τῆ πεντηκοστῆ ἁγιωτάτης ἡμέρας, about the moſt holy Day of *Eaſter*, he expreſly ſays,

* *Ep.* 119.

* *Rev.* 1. 10. *Vid. Epiphan. & Nazian. Orat.* 1. *in Paſch.*

* *Pſalm.* 18. 24. one of the Pſalms for *Eaſter*-day.

says, that we have received this venerable Festival from our Saviour, as that by which we hold the hope of Immortality.

Const. in Ep. ad em. Eccl. apud Euseb. de Vita Const. Lib. 3. c. 17. 18.

And in the same Epistle, he likewise takes notice of the διεσμένας νηστείας; the determinate fixt Lent Fasts, as preparatory thereunto, which were also enjoyned under a Penalty to be observed both by the Clergy and Laity in the sixty ninth Apostolical Canon, which expresly mentions τὴν ἁγίαν τεσσαρακοστὴν, the holy Quadragesimal or Lent Fast, together with the τεσσάρα καὶ παρασκευὴν which doubtless includes and denotes, as well the annual Lent Fast of *Ashwednesday* and *Good-Friday*, as well as the weekly *Wednesdays* and *Fridays* Fasts, as both in use, and under Ecclesiastical Injunction even in these early Days, and accordingly has been observ'd all along, and still continues to be so in our Church.

And to conclude this particular, it may not be amiss to add what passes under the Name of *Ignatius* in an Epistle to the *Philippians*, but indeed is judged by some learned Men to be of a much later date, and annexed to his Epistles in the time of the Emperor *Anastasius*, about the year 510. but however is old enough to speak for it self, and attest the ancient Use of this, and some other both Fasts and Feasts of the Church; which, because it particularly makes mention of I will give you the very Words; Τὰς ἑορτὰς μὴ ἀλλοιάζετε, τὴν τεσσαρακοστὴν μὴ ἐξουθενεῖτε, μίμησιν γὰρ πτεύχετε τῆς τοῦ Κυρίου πολιτείας· μεθ' ὕπνου, τοῦ πάθους ἐβδομάδα μὴ παρεξίετε τεσσάρα καὶ παρασκευὴν νηστεύοντες· ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ δὲ Σάββατον νηστεύετε, (πλὴν ἑνὸς σαββάτου τοῦ πάσχα) χριστοκτόνοι εἰσὶν. Where you see that the Author whosoever he was, after he had exhorted both Clergy and Laity (for the Epistle respects both) not to slight, contemn, dishonour or profain the Feasts and Fasts of the Church, he descends to particulars and takes notice of the Quadragesimal or Lent Fast, as the Copy of our Lord's Conversation here upon Earth; of the Passion Week, or Holy Week before *Easter*, and therein of the fourth day, or the *Wednesday*, wherein our Saviour was betrayed, and *Good-Friday* called the παρασκευὴ the Parasceve, because it was the Day of the *Jewish* preparation, in which our

Ignat. Ep. ad Phil. III. Ed Voss.

our Saviour ſuffered: for which reaſons the weekly *Wedneſdays* and *Fridays* throughout the Year have been obſerved as Days of abſtinence, even from the beginning to this very Day. After which, together with the Lord's-Day, he makes expreſs mention of the Paſs-over or Paſchal Feaſt, the ſame with our *Eaſter*.

I ſhall not need to deſcend lower and ſhew you concerning theſe Paſchal both Faſts and Feaſts, what ſucceeding Fathers and Councils ſay of them; your own Studies and reading will furniſh you better than I can.

And 'tis further remarkable, that many of the Ancients that take notice of *Eaſter* and the preceding Lent Faſts, make mention alſo of *Pentecoſt* or *Whitſunday* as ſubſequent thereunto, and depending upon it; whoſe Obſervation likewiſe is immemorial. The Author of the Queſtions and Anſwers in *Juſtin Martyr*, tells us, That *Irenæus* made mention of it in a Book which he wrote concerning *Eaſter*, now loſt. And * *Tertullian* does the ſame in ſeveral Places of his Writings. And ſo after him does *Origen* in his eighth Book againſt *Celſus*, where he vindicates the Chriſtian Obſervation of *Eaſter* and *Whitſunday*, and the Paraſceve or *Good-Friday*, together with the other Feaſts of the Church, from being at all concerned in that place of St. *Paul*, *Gal.* 4. 10. where he blames the Judaizing *Galatians* for obſerving Days, and Months, and Times, and Years, meaning after the *Jewiſh* manner, and 'tis alſo taken notice of by ſeveral others of the Ancients, too many to be here recited at this time, if I had had them all by me.

Queſt. 1. 15.

* *Vid. Tertul. de Idol. c.* 14. *p.* 94. *& de Cor. c.* 3. *p.* 102. *de Bapt. c.* 19. *p.* 232.

The Feaſt of the *Epiphany* in Memory of that Miraculous Appearance of the Star at our Saviour's Birth, which guided the Wiſemen to Chriſt; and of the glorious Manifeſtation of the Holy Trinity at his Baptiſm, has the like Suffrages from Antiquity, and particularly from St. *Chryſoſtom* and St. *Auguſtin*, who tells us in his 32*d* Sermon *de Tempore*, that the Solemnity of this Day was known throughout the whole World, and generally obſerved, except by the *Donatiſts*, who (ſays he) would not keep it becauſe they were *Schiſmaticks*, and loved not Unity, and becauſe they hated the Eaſtern Church where the Star appeared.

* *Hom.* 23. *de Baptiſmo Chriſti, tom.* 1. *p.* 278.

And

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And from this Feast of the *Epiphany*, we may well and safely collect the ancient Observation of *Christmas* in Memory of our Saviour's Nativity, which for a long time in the *East* past under the same Name, and as is probable, was observed in *January*, till receiving light from the *Western* Churches, they changed it to the 25*th* of *December*. And St. *Chrysostom* hints as much,* where he tells us, That it was not at that time above ten Years that it began to be observed on that day at *Antioch*; which hinders not but that it might be observed long before; for so it was under an other Name. And the same Father tells us, That the keeping of *Christmas*-Day was ancient even from the first times, and That the Church now kept the true Day, and says further, that the keeping of this is one of the signs of our love to Christ. And St. *Augustin*, (a very sufficient Voucher in these matters) in his 119 Epistle, takes notice of it as a Practice long before his time, and says, That it was the Custom of Holy Church to keep this day upon the 25*th* of *December*. Which if so, then it may, for ought we know, be as ancient as any of the rest; for we must not conceive, that every holy Day had its first Original only then, when we find it first mentioned by any Author; for many ancient Writings are lost, and those that are extant, might not have occasion to take notice of them, till a long time after their Institution: the constant Practice and uninterrupted Tradition of the Church for many Ages past, which has handed them down even to our Times, is Authority enough for what we do in this matter, or any thing else of the like nature, though there were not any Author extant to give us an account thereof.

* *Serm.* 31. *Tom.* 5. p. 417.

Orat. in Natal. Dom. Tom. 5. *Edit. Savil.*

And as for the rest of the Holy-days observed by our Church, (which I cannot now stand to insist on particularly, as requiring a Book rather than a Sermon) you may be sure, that whether sooner or later, they had an Ecclesiastical Institution at least, and were received in all other Churches besides our own. And since it is very well known, that in the very first Ages of the Primitive Church, the Memories of the Martyrs had their Anniversary Solemnities, we may well think that they would not forget the Memory

of

of the Apoſtles, who (next to our Saviour) were the firſt and chief Founders and Planters of the Chriſtian Religion, which every one of them, except St. *John*, ſealed with their blood. And of ſuch only it is that our Church takes notice in her Calendar of Saints, which admits none but thoſe, of whoſe Saintſhip not the leaſt doubt can be made, without any further inquiry into their Originals. And I am apt to think the practice it ſelf of ſetting apart certain Days for the Celebration of the Memories of the Apoſtles, was begun by the Authority of ſome of the ſurviving Apoſtles themſelves; and as occaſions preſented, was in like manner followed and continued by the Church afterwards; which could not but think it reaſonable to do all poſſible honour to their Memories, who with ſuch Chriſtian Gallantry and Heroiſm laid down their Lives for their Religion; partly, that others might be encouraged to the like Patience and Fortitude; and partly, that Virtue even in this World might not want its Reward.

However, if any doubt be made of their Original Inſtitutions, St. *Auguſtin*'s Golden Rule may well take place here, *Quod Univerſa tenet Eccleſia, nec Conciliis inſtitutum, ſed ſemper retentum eſt, non niſi Autoritate Apoſtolicâ traditum rectiſſimè creditur*; that whatſoever the Univerſal Church holds, and always has done; if it appear not to have been decreed by any Councils, is moſt rightly believed to have been delivered by the Authority of the holy Apoſtles themſelves. So that all ancient and general Uſages, whoſe beginnings are unknown, are by this Rule to be reſolved into an Apoſtolical Inſtitution; which is Warrant enough for the obſervation of any other Feaſts or Faſts of our Church, of whoſe Original we have no account. And ſince Chriſt himſelf who at his departure hence aſſured his Apoſtles, That all Power was given to him in Heaven and in Earth, did delegate and commit at leaſt ſo much of it to them and their Succeſſors, as was neceſſary for the regulating and governing of his Church, which he had intruſted with them in his abſence, and promiſed to be with them in the adminiſtration thereof to the end of the World; what need any queſtion be made either of the Authority or Lawfulneſs of ſuch Holy-

St. *Auguſt de Baptiſm. cont. Donat.*

St. *Matth.* c. 28. *V.* 18.

V. 20.

da

days as our Church recommends to our Obſervance, ſince ſhe has Power by virtue of the ſaid Commiſſion, to inſtitute and ſet apart any other Days to holy and religious Uſes, that ſhe ſhall ſee very good reaſon for? And this will oblige me to take notice (beſides the holy Days before ſpoken of, which are common with us to other Churches) of three more peculiar to this Church and Nation of ours, and may therefore well be ſtiled National or Municipal Holy-Days, in contradiſtinction to the reſt, becauſe they concern us alone; and they are the fifth of *November*, the thirtieth of *January*, and the twenty ninth of *May*; which are by no means to be forgotten by us, they being the publick Memorials of the various and moſt remarkable Providences of Almighty God to theſe Churches and Kingdoms, either in a way of Mercy to excite our moſt ſolemn Thankſgivings; or in a way of Judgment to humble us for our Sins, and conſtrain us to the publick Expreſſions thereof, and the viſible teſtifications of our Repentance, by weeping, faſting and praying: which we are under an obligation to obſerve as well as any other of the reſt before-mentioned; for they have not only an Eccleſiaſtical but a Civil, both Inſtitution and Sanction, for they are enjoyned by Act of Parliament. And indeed ſo are all the reſt; for at the beginning of our Reformation, they were all confirmed and eſtabliſhed by an Act of Parliament in the 5*th* and 6*th* year of King *Edward* the ſixth; which particularly ſets forth what Holy-Days are to be obſerved, the very ſame that we obſerve at this day. Which Act though it was afterwards repealed by the firſt of Queen *Mary*, yet it was virtually and intentionally at leaſt revived by the firſt of King *James*, which repealed that of Queen *Mary*. And though I find ſome make a Query upon it, there is no doubt but all our Holy-days are fully and amply reſtored by the Act for Uniformity, in the 14*th* of our preſent Gracious King, (whom God long preſerve) which comprehends and takes in the whole Body of the Book of Common-Prayer, together with the Calendar, Tables, Rubricks, and whatſoever elſe is contained in it, and makes it as good Law, as any other whatſoever, and conſequently of neceſſary and indiſpenſable Obligation.

Having ſaid thus much, and more than I thought to have done at firſt, concerning our Holy-Days, and ſhewn you their Authority and Warrant from the Practice of the Apoſtles and Primitive Church, from whom doubtleſs they received their Inſtitution; I have in a good meaſure prevented my inquiring into,

1. The lawfulneſs of them, (the firſt General propounded to be diſcourſed of) to which I ſhall not (to avoid being tedious) add much more at preſent; for who ſhall be ſo bold, as to queſtion the Lawfulneſs of that which the Univerſal Church has all along received and entertained? Should St. *Auguſtin* now ſtart out of his Grave, he would according to his own Rule, preſently doom that Man to *Bedlam*, that ſhould be ſo hardy at this time o'th' day; *Iniquiſſimæ inſaniæ eſt* (ſaith he *) *exiſtimare non rectè fieri quod ab univerſâ Eccleſiâ fit.* i. e. 'tis the moſt unreaſonable madneſs in the world, to think that that is not lawfully and rightly done, which is practiſed by the Univerſal Church.

* *Ep.* 118.

But notwithſtanding this, there are in our Age ſprung up a Generation of Men, of heady, ungovernable, factious, dividing Spirits, that like the *Aerians* of old (a brain-ſick ſort of Hereticks) will neither feaſt nor faſt with our Church, but are diſſatisfied with every thing ſhe does, and call every thing into queſtion, which ſhe either recommends or enjoyns, though never ſo innocent and juſtifiable in it ſelf. They are always finding fault, and love to make holes where there are none, and will be ſtarting Objections, and creating Doubts and Scruples moſt of all where there is the leaſt need. And if they can find but a Scripture that in outward ſound and appearance chimes to their thinking, they will be ſure to lay violent hands on it, and forcibly preſs it in to their Service, as an unavoidable exception to what they are reſolved to oppoſe. As for purpoſe, they will in no wiſe allow the Obſervation of our Holy-days to be lawful; though by the way I know no Command in Scripture, wherein they are forbidden, which is enough to make them lawful; for where there is no Law either commanding, or forbidding, there can be no tranſgreſſion, and, conſequently, that that muſt be lawful which is under no prohibition.

Now

Now to prove the unlawfulneſs of them, they will venture to bring two places of Scripture; the firſt is, *Galat.* 4. 10. 11. *Ye obſerve Days, and Months, and Times, and Years; I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.* 1. *Obj.*

Indeed had this been ſpoken in general of all kind of obſerving ſuch Times, it had been to the purpoſe; but it being plain, both from the ſcope of the Epiſtle, which was to prevent their falling into Judaiſm; and the frequent mention of the Law therein; and alſo from the Context; that the Apoſtle here refers to the *Jewiſh* manner of obſerving ſuch Times, (which it ſeems ſome of the *Galatians* either had done, or were ready to do, having, through the ſeduction of falſe Teachers crept in among them, been made to believe, That the Obſervation of them, together with all other Rites and Ceremonies of the Moſaick Law, was ſtill in force, the thing that the Apoſtle blames them for and endeavours to prevent and bring them off from) it ſignifies nothing at all to the matter; and beſides I ſhewed you before, That *Origen* vindicates this very place from having any thing contrary to the Chriſtian Feaſts; which though they might be obſerved at the ſame time, yet to quite different Ends and Purpoſes, and upon ſeveral and diſtinct Accounts; And ſo this Objection of theirs falls quite to the ground. *Anſ.*

Their other Place is, *Col.* 2. 16. *Let no Man judg you in Meat and Drink, or in reſpect of a Holy-day, or of the New-Moon, or of the Sabbath-days.* 2. *Obj.*

Where it is plain, both by the mention of the New-Moons, and the Sabbaths, and from what he adds in the next Verſe, where he calls them a ſhadow of things to come; that the ſame Apoſtle means and intends only the *Jewiſh* Feaſts, *Quatenus Jewiſh*, as attended and celebrated with ſuch Rites and Ceremonies, as were all but Types of Chriſtianity, and therefore now in the preſence of Chriſtianity it ſelf (which is the Body of ſuch Shadows) to be laid aſide as not at all Obligatory. So that this Text is as much *Anſ.*

to the purpoſe as the former, that is to ſay, nothing at all.

But if any will quarrel at our Holy-days (as I know ſome do) becauſe they have been abuſed by the Papiſt, this is the moſt childiſh and weakeſt Objection of all; for if every thing that either is, or hath been abuſed, muſt be preſently diſowned and rejected; then we muſt put out the Sun, if we can, or (which is more feaſible) deny our ſelves the benefit and comfort of its refreſhing Beams, and not ſuffer it to ſhine upon us, but run all into the ſhade, and affect nothing but twilight, or a melancholy glimmering darkneſs, (the true Emblem of *Enthuſiaſm*) becauſe it has been abuſed to Idolatry. We muſt ſtave all our Pipes and Hogsheads of Wine, as well *Spaniſh* as *French*, without the help and authority of an enabling Act, becauſe they have been abuſed to drunkenneſs. We muſt throw away our very Bibles, becauſe they have been, and are ſtill wreſted and perverted, as well by Sectaries, as Papiſts. Nay, we muſt put out our very Eyes, becauſe ſome have abuſed them to Luſt and Wantonneſs. And I know nothing that we can keep and enjoy at this rate, but what has ſome way or other been ſubject to Abuſes. Religion and Chriſtianity it ſelf is every day abuſed by ſome or other; what then? muſt we all ſet up for Atheiſts, or turn Turks, or Infidels, becauſe of that? I hope not. Let us but purge and take away the Abuſes, and reſtore Things to their right, proper and primitive Uſes, and all will be well enough.

And this Care (God be thanked) our Church has long ſince taken with reſpect to Holy-days, which ſhe has freed from all Popiſh, Superſtitious Appendages, as alſo all other her wiſe and primitively Chriſtian Conſtitutions, as you may ſee in the account ſhe gives of Ceremonies, why ſome be aboliſhed, and others retained; and in her Prefaces before the Book of Common-Prayer.

Neither can any well object the extravagant and inſupportable number of them, (as amongſt the Papiſts) for that is not ſo great, nor our attendance that is required upon the publick Service on thoſe Days, ſo long, as renders them inconſiſtent with our other Buſineſſes or Worldly Affairs,

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fairs, which may well enough comply with them. For if we will, we may Order and Contrive them ſo, that they may rather be furthered and promoted thereby, than hindred; to be ſure obtain a Bleſſing, and ſo become the more comfortable to us. So that I ſee not how upon any account whatſoever, they can truly be ſaid to be unlawful. And if they be not unlawful, then certainly by the Rule of Contraries, they muſt be lawful; for there is no Medium that I know between lawful and unlawful. Which was the firſt thing to be proved.

Secondly, They are not only barely lawful, but they are in diverſe Reſpects and upon ſeveral weighty Accounts very uſeful. They are Teſtimonies of our Thankfulneſs to Almighty God for Mercies and Benefits received. They are publick Profeſſions of Chriſtianity, and conduce very much to the Splendor and outward Dignity of our Religion. They are forcible Witneſſes of ancient Truth; they provoke to good Works, and to the exerciſe of all Piety and Virtue. They ſet before us the nobleſt Examples, and are excellent helps of Devotion. They are Prelibations and Shadows of our endleſs Felicity in Heaven; and on Earth the moſt generally legible and obvious Regiſters, and moſt extenſive and laſting Records of the moſt remarkable Paſſages of Chriſtianity, ſuited and fitted to the Capacity of the meaneſt, moſt ſimple, and moſt vulgar Chriſtians; which make up by far the greateſt Number, and ought therefore the moſt carefully to be provided for. They are the illiterate and plain Mans Catechiſm; his Artificial Memory to bring to mind the chief things that were performed by, or happened to our Saviour: they contain the whole Hiſtory of our Redemption, the ſeveral Steps and Degrees by which it was effected and perfected. They are the Chriſtian-Mans Phylacteries; and were it not for the Obſervation of theſe Days, I am verily perſwaded, thouſands of the more ordinary ſort of People, had never come to the knowledg of many principal things that concern the Chriſtian Religion; or underſtood any thing of the Lives, Examples and greateſt Acts of the Apoſtles; or indeed that ever there were

were any such Men in the World, as those, whose Names and Deeds are transmitted and conveyed to them by the meer Observation of these days. And I think we cannot better impute the gross Ignorance that that sort of People generally labour under at this day, than to the long disuse of them in the late times, and to our present great and shameful neglect of them. We see all means are little enough to bring People to a competent knowledg and understanding of their Christianity; and we need make use of this, as well as other Helps in Order thereunto, that where others fail, this by Gods blessing may take place, and so make up and supply what is wanting in the effectualness of the other.

I cannot now stand to insist upon Particulars, and shew you how every one of them, in its Place and Order, becomes serviceable to the Purposes of Religion; (their Collects, Epistles and Gospels sufficiently explain their use and meaning) for I am sensible I have already trespassed upon your patience; and therefore I shall hasten to the

3. Third General, which is to shew what account we are to make of them, and the respect and esteem that we are to have for them. And surely if they be so useful as I have shewn, they may well challenge our Regards, and we ought upon that account to set no small Value upon them. And since Holy Church hath set them apart, and taken them out of the heap of Common-days, and advanced them into a higher Rank and Order, to serve more excellent Purposes, we may well, (*mutatis mutandis*) here ask *Ahasuerus*'s Question, *What shall be done unto the Days which the Church delighteth to honour*? and return *Haman*'s Answer with the like Alterations, *Let the Sacerdotal Apparel be brought which the Church useth to wear at the Times of her solemn Ministrations; the Sacred Vestments, the Festival Ornaments, and array them withal. And let them be attended with Prayers and Praises, Hymns and Doxologies, and all other holy Services which the Church appoints. And let it be proclaimed in every Street,* i. e. *in every Isle of the Church, before all the People, and in the presence of the whole Congregation, That thus it shall be done to the Days which the Church delighteth to honour.* So that they

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they having publick notice thereof, may flock in, and fill the houſe of God, and add to the Solemnity.

And it chiefly and principally belongs to us of the Clergy to do *Haman*'s part, and ſee that they have their due Honour and Service, according to the Churches Appointment: And not only render it our ſelves, but procure others to do ſo likewiſe. We are frequently to call upon the People, and not only deſire, but require their Attendance at Church on theſe Days, to joyn with us in the Publick Service and Worſhip of God. And let none of us with *Haman* grudg the Office, or do it with an ill-Will, and a forced Complyance, but with a ready Mind, with a full purpoſe of Heart; manifeſting a chearful forwardneſs to honor God, to promote Religion, to teſtifie our Obedience to the Church, our ſubmiſſive reſpect to our Governors, to diſcharge our Obligations, and keep a Conſcience void of Offence, both towards God and towards Man. That ſo making our Light to ſhine before Men, and others ſeeing our good Works, may by our Example, be brought to glorifie our Heavenly Father. And therefore in the

Fourth and laſt Place, I ſhall apply all, and Earneſtly Exhort you all to the conſtant Obſervance of ſo Lawful, ſo Uſeful, ſo Honourable and Commendable a Service, as you have heard the Obſervation of ſuch Holy Days as our Church appoints, is. 4.

And to You my Brethren, I hope I need not to uſe many Words; I ſpeak as unto Wiſe Men, You underſtand what I ſay; and I need but mind You of Your Obligations to both Church and State, whoſe Miniſters and Subjects We all are, and therein to ſuch as are ſet over us in the Lord, our Dioceſan in particular, whoſe Curates We all are; from and under whom it is that we have the Charge of all the Souls that belong to our reſpective Pariſhes; who at our Inſtitution, when he inveſts us in our Livings, and commits the Truſt thereof to us, does it in theſe Words, *Accipe Curam Tuam & Meam.* Let us not muſe and pore ſo long upon the *Tuam*, as quite to forget the *Meam.* We are under a great Miſtake if we think to Monopolize and Engroſs all to our ſelves, as well His, as

Our

Our own Part; the Benefit indeed is Ours, but the Office is His; which becauſe He cannot be always perſonally preſent in every particular Pariſh of his Dioceſs, is committed to our particular Truſt and Care, to do what primarily and principally belongs to Him; And 'tis for the ſake of the Latter that we have the Former; for, *Non datur Beneficium, niſi propter Officium.* If we wilfully neglect to perform the one in any requiſite and preſcribed Inſtance whatſoever, He may juſtly and legally deprive us of the other: for as We are his Subſtitutes, We are accountable to him for what we do; and we muſt do nothing of our own heads without him; but muſt take our Inſtructions for the Management of our ſeveral Cures from ſuch Rules as he propoſes to us, and which he and the reſt of the Fathers and Governours of the Church, have agreed ſhall be the Meaſure of our Obedience and Conformity, to wit, the Canons and Conſtitutions of the Church: Which you ſee He has hitherto all along made the Ground of his Conferences, and to theſe it is that he expects our Compliance. He requires nothing from us but what we have already either ſubſcribed or ſworn to; particularly in the Inſtance before us, we are obliged both by the Rubricks and Canons to obſerve the Holy Days of the Church; And if, notwithſtanding, we will take no Manner of Care about them, but will run away with the Benefit without regard to the Office that is incumbent upon us, We *Judas*-like take the Purſe and betray our Maſter.

It greatly behoves us therefore to be always mindful of our Office, as well as our Benefice, in every part and parcel thereof; as alſo of that Relation that we all ſtand in to the Church, and ſuch as have the Rule over us in the Lord; how that we are no other than the Churches Stewards; Now (as the Apoſtle ſays *) *It is required in Stewards, that a man be found faithful,* to wit, in the diſcharge of that Truſt that is committed to him. And ſince it is one part of our Truſt to ſee to the due Obſervation of the Churches Holy-days, let us diligently and carefully apply our ſelves to a conſcionable performance of it. Let us neither out of Pride, or an over-weening conceit of our ſelves, think our ſelves too good to ſtoop to ſuch Miniſteries; or out of lazineſs and ſloth

* 1 Cor. 4. 2.

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ſloth, or popular Compliance, neglect them; much leſs ſuffer that time, which ſhould be ſpent on thoſe Days in our attendance upon holy Offices, to be imployed in any idle Sports and Paſtimes, or ſuch unlawful Games, as the Canons forbid. Let it not for ſhame be ſaid of any Country Parſon or Vicar, That he is ſo much addicted to Good-Fellowſhip, or to his Country Recreations and Pleaſures, that on Holy-days, when he ſhould cauſe a Bell to be toll'd to give his Pariſhioners notice to reſort to Church, to hear Divine Service, he is either imbezling that time in an Ale-houſe, or following his Dogs abroad in the Fields, and preferring the noiſe and cry of a Pack of Hounds, as much better Muſick than a *Te Deum*, a *Gloria Patri*, or any of the Divine Hymns and Prayers of the Church. This ill becomes one in Holy Orders to be guilty of any ſuch Enormity or Irregularity, at ſuch a time eſpecially, when he ſhould be attending his Office; and I hope there are none here, but think ſo.

By theſe and the like ways, we do in effect deſecrate and unhallow what the Church has made Holy, and degrade and depreſs what ſhe has dignified and advanc'd, and thruſt them down into the Rank of Common-Days. By this means it is that we not only juſtifie our Adverſaries Attempts to aboliſh them, but lend our helping-hand thereunto; and ſo give them occaſion to think, that they have good reaſon on their ſide for what they do, ſince they ſee us, contrary to our Obligations, to ſlight and diſregard them. And thus by quitting our Poſt, we tamely deliver them up into the Enemies hands, to be treated according to their Mercy, which to our Coſt, we have found no better than Cruelty.

Let us conſider the Dignity of our Office, the weight and importance of the Buſineſs we are imployed about, and the reward that is propounded and held forth to us, if we be found faithful. Let us therefore with St. *Paul* * magnifie our Office, and not baſely proſtitute it to mean and unworthy things, to the Luſts and Humors of any Man, or any ſorts of Men whatſoever; but impartially and without reſpect of Perſons do whatſoever is incumbent upon us. Our

* *Rom.* 11.13.

St. Luke 18. 1. Saviour that bids us pray always, and not to faint; and St.
1. Thess. 5. 17. *Paul* that bids us pray without ceasing; meant no less surely, than that we should embrace and make use of every Opportunity that the Church puts into our hands of doing so. I must confess, and am sensible, that many of us hereabouts lye under some discouragement of performing this part of our Duty, upon the account of the wretched backwardness and averseness of our People, generally to appear at their Parish Churches on those Days; and in truth 'tis great Pity, and a great Shame too, That the best Religion should have the worst Votaries; but yet this hinders not, but we may do our Part notwithstanding, their Neglect will not excuse ours; we may however put them upon Trial, and by the toll of a Bell call them to Church; if they come, we have gain'd our purpose; if not, we leave them inexcusable; the fault is theirs, and not ours, so long as we fairly invite them, and are ready to attend our Office. And indeed whether they come or no, I think we are obliged to perform the Office; for if the Church declares in expres Words (as I am sure she do's in the second and third Rubricks at the End of the Preface concerning the Service of the Church.) That all Priests and Deacons are to say dayly the Morning and Evening Prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by Sickness, or some other urgent Cause. And again, that if any of the said Priests and Deacons be a Curate, that is to say, one that from and under the Bishop has the charge of a Parish, (for so the Word is to be taken in the Churches sense) he shall say the same in the Parish Church or Chappel where he Ministreth, and cause a Bell to be tolled thereunto a convenient time before he begin, that the People may come to hear God's Word, and to pray with him. And if we are to do this daily either privately or openly, that is to say, with Company or without, and by our selves if we cannot have them; and that in the Parish Church too, as the only Place set apart for that purpose, and so the most proper; then much more are we to do this on Holy-days, when the Church more especially requires our attendance on our Office.

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And let no body think, that the Prayers when performed alone, by the Miniſter, are of no Efficacy or Virtue; for they being the Churches Prayers, intended as a publick Acknowledgment of her intire ſubjection and ſole Dependance on Almighty God; and an outward viſible Expreſſion of her Homage and Allegiance to him; and a publick Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thanksgiving to him for Mercies and Benefits received; as alſo a Profeſſion of her Faith in him; a Teſtimony of the great Eſteem ſhe has for him, and a ſolemn Addreſs and Supplication to him for things needful or convenient both for the Souls and Bodies of all her profeſſed Members; I ſay, they being all, and more than this, and of a general and publick Concern; if agreeably thereunto they be offered up by a Publick Miniſter, one conſtituted and appointed by the Church, for that very end and purpoſe; and in a publick Place, and at a publick Time, and in the name of the whole Church, and on behalf of the People; 'tis not their abſence however occaſioned, that will render them ineffectual, eſpecially to ſuch as have a lawful Impediment, and would come if they could. Nay, even thoſe that refuſe to come may receive ſome benefit by them, for we pray for thoſe that have erred and are deceived, and are out of the way, as well as for others, and for the abſent as well as for the preſent. And to be ſure no Body will be the worſe for the recital of our Office.

'Tis not with our Prayers, as it is with our Sermons; In theſe we ſpeak and preach to the People, and their preſence is eſſential to the very performance; but in thoſe we ſpeak and pray to God; and though their preſence be upon ſeveral accounts requiſite, expedient, uſeful and beneficial, nay, and in ſome Reſpects neceſſary too; yet it is not eſſential and abſolutely neceſſary to our performance, for I hope we may pray for Jews, Turks, Infidels, Hereticks, and ſuch whoſe preſence we cannot expect, and for the whole Congregation of Chriſtian People diſperſed throughout the whole World. Nay, for the actually excommunicate (that they may repent and return) whom we are not to admit to our Prayers, till they be reconciled to the Church. And if ſo, then we may, notwithſtanding, do our Office, and

pray for them that will not pray with us, without any great Soleciſm or Abſurdity that will enſue thereupon. And beſides, 'tis methinks a little hard and unreaſonable, that ſuch as would come if they could, but are hindred by neceſſary Occaſions, and ſo far are excuſable; ſhould ſuffer for the ſake of thoſe that will not come, and be deprived of the Benefit of thoſe Prayers which we are obliged to put up for them, but refuſe ſo to do, for this reaſon only, becauſe we have no body to join with us. Shall we deny them that would, but cannot come, the benefit of the Churches Prayers for the ſake of thoſe that will not? this is to make them ſuffer for another's fault, and in a ſenſe to deſtroy the Righteous with the Wicked; which God forbid. So that all things conſidered, this is no ſufficient Plea for the neglect of our Office in this particular, which is much better done, than left undone.

And if we thus conſcientiouſly do it in Obedience to the Church, and hold on and perſevere in our Duty; though we fail of the deſired Succeſs, yet God is not unrighteous to forget our Work and Labour of Love; and it may pleaſe him in time to turn the Hearts of the Children to the Fathers, and the Diſobedient to the Wiſdom of the Juſt, and make ready a People prepared for the Lord. But when We give over, all is loſt; for if We that are God's Miniſters, and ought to attend continually upon this very thing; We that by the nature of our Employment are to ſtand between God and Men; We that are ordained for Men in things pertaining to God; if We lay aſide our Office, and ceaſe to offer up Prayers and Supplications for them, with ſtrong Cryes and Tears, as our Saviour did, * *Who ſhall undertake it on their behalf?*

* *Heb.* 5. 7.

Let us call to mind the Apoſtles and Primitive Clergy, what Difficulties they encountred, what Obſtructions and Impediments they met with in their Miniſtry; yet by their indefatigable Induſtry, by their aſſiduous and daily Applications, and God's bleſſing upon their honeſt and ſincere Endeavours, they overcame all at laſt.

We have (beſides the Scripture) an excellent Rule to guide us, the Canons and Conſtitutions of the Church;

And

And so long as we keep close to these, we cannot do amiss; I am sure 'tis our greatest Security and Wisdom so to do. And we have for our further encouragement also, an excellent Ruler, our Right Reverend Diocesan, that will not on his part be wanting to us in any thing, if we do our Duty as we ought.

But I have said enough for my Part, and perhaps, as some may think too much, yet not so much (I am sure) as the Subject either requires or deserves. And therefore I shall leave it to my Brethren to add what they think fit, and conclude all with a Saying of St. *Augustine*, *Rectè Festa Ecclesiæ colunt, qui se Ecclesiæ Filios recognoscunt*; i. e. All they that own themselves the Sons of the Church, will rightly observe the Festivals of the Church; or negatively thus, Whosoever (having no lawful just Impediment, or reasonable Cause to the contrary) does not duly and rightly observe the Churches Holy-days, (whatsoever he may pretend) he is no true Son of the Church. *Serm. 253. de Temp.*

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Glory and Praise, henceforth and for evermore, Amen.

FINIS.

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